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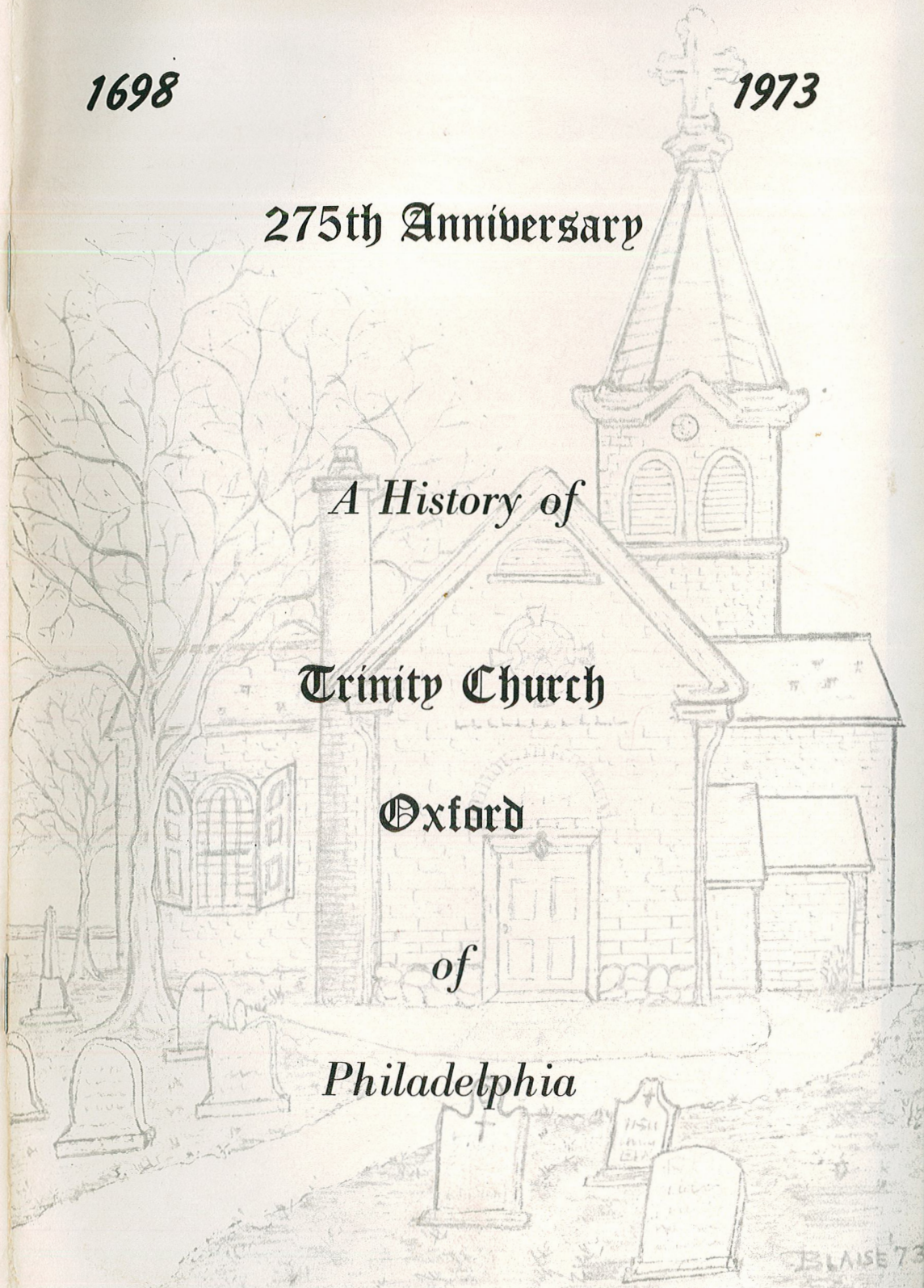
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1698

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275th Anniversary

*A History of*  
**Trinity Church**  
**Oxford**  
*of*  
**Philadelphia**



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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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IN THE COUNTY OF

*Philadelphia*

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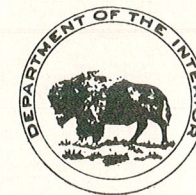
AS - POSSESSING - EXCEPTIONAL - HISTORIC  
OR - ARCHITECTURAL - INTEREST - AND - AS  
BEING - WORTHY - OF - MOST - CAREFUL - PRE-  
SERVATION - FOR - THE - BENEFIT - OF - FUTURE  
GENERATIONS - AND - THAT - TO - THIS - END - A  
RECORD - OF - ITS - PRESENT - APPEARANCE  
AND - CONDITION - HAS - BEEN - MADE - AND  
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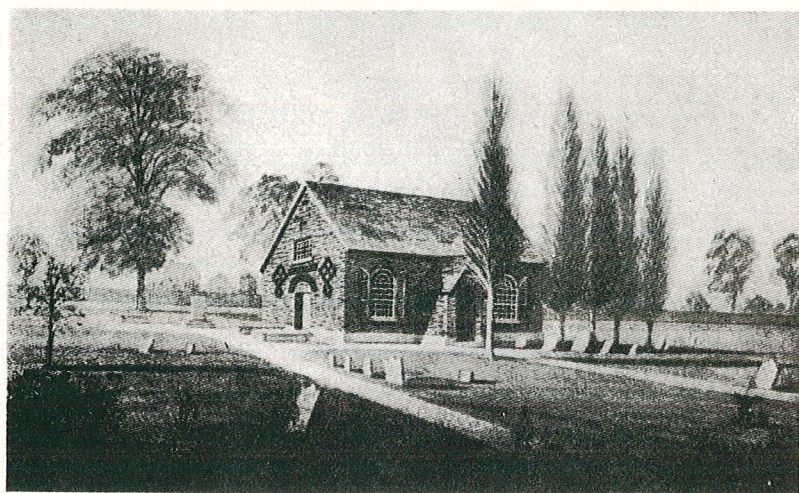
*Harold L. Iches*

Secretary-of-the-Interior

*Acknowledgment is hereby made that much of the material used in this account was obtained from a Historical Sketch written by Rev. E. Y. Buchanan, former rector, August 2, 1857.*

*Also additional notes and data were obtained from Mr. William Overington, Jr. former Accounting Warden and Vestryman.*

AN ACCOUNT  
OF THE HISTORY  
OF  
TRINITY CHURCH, OXFORD  
PHILADELPHIA  
1698 to 1973  
by  
HERBERT R. SPARKS, Vestryman  
(1885-1969)  
RAYMOND T. BOSWELL  
C. NORMAN KUNZ



Trinity Church, Oxford, Philadelphia, Built in 1711.

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

Trinity Church, Oxford is one of the oldest churches in this part of the country. The exact date of its origin, or rather when services of the Church of England were first held, is unknown, but it was most likely in 1698 if not before. It is known however, that there were both a church and congregation here, as early as the year 1700. The authority for this statement is a letter of the Rev. Evan Evans, (rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, 1700 to 1718) written in the year 1707 to the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts". In it occurs the following passage: "Trinity Church, in Oxford Township, lies in the County of Philadelphia, nine miles from the city, where for the first four years after my arrival in Philadelphia I frequently preached and administered both the Sacraments, and had, when I last preached in it, about one hundred and forty people—most of the people brought over to the Church of England from Quakers, Anabaptists, and other persuasions."

Origin

Evan  
Evans

Now the date of Mr. Evans' arrival in Philadelphia was the year 1700; so that, in that year, there were both a church and congregation here. It is further noticeable, that he writes as though he had *found* them here and in no wise been the means of establishing them. The only other minister who could have done so was the Rev. Thomas Clayton, the founder of the Church in Philadelphia and the first Church of England minister known to have been in the Colony of Pennsylvania. This would place the commencement of the Parish at least two years earlier, since Mr. Clayton died in 1698. It may seem strange that it cannot be stated precisely when the Church of England services were first held but according to George Harrison Fisher the obscurity of the first five years of Christ Church is almost as deep.

Thomas  
Clayton

A marble stone in the west wall of the Church states that Church of England services were first held on this site A.D. 1698 in a log meeting house that had belonged to the Oxford Society of Friends. These Friends or Quakers had been under the leadership of George Keith who had returned to England in 1694 and taken orders in the Church. In the journal of the Rev. George Keith it is stated that Rev. Mr. "Claiton" had baptised, before Mr. Evans time, "of men, women and children in Pennsylvania and West Jersey, of English and Welch, about five hundred; many or most of them having been Quakers, and the children of Quakers, and Quakers affected; and besides these, many who had left Quakerism and had joined to the church had been baptised in infancy, not having been born of Quaker

George  
Keith

Quaker  
Converts

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

parents." Whether through Keith's influence or not, many of these Quakers became converts to the church, which fact is attested by one of the oldest grave stones in the church yard. Some of these Quakers became Baptists and Seventh Day Baptists, as they were divided on the Sabbath question. Those who adhered to the first day Sabbath joined the Pennypack Baptist Church.

We have in our possession the original deed dated December 30, 1700 in which Thomas Graves conveyed three acres of land to Joshua Carpenter and John Moore in trust for Oxford Church, which were to be for "the use and service of those of the communion of our holy mother, the Church of England, and to no other use or uses whatsoever".

This Joshua Carpenter, here mentioned as one of the trustees, is the same who afterwards built Carpenter's Hall, the historical building in downtown Philadelphia off Chestnut Street.

The name, of Thomas Graves, who conveyed the property to our church, afterwards occurs in a list of four persons, who on the 18th of April 1715 were chosen church wardens for the ensuing year. The entry of this appointment of church wardens is the first one on our oldest vestry book. The other persons were James Morgan, Edward Collins, and John Roberts. The last named was most probably the husband of the Elizabeth on whose grave stone is the following quaint epitaph. On the outer side are the words:

"Here lyeth the body of Elizabeth, the wife of John Roberts, who departed this life, May Ye 6th, in the year of our Lord God 1708, aged 41 years.

"Weep not for me, for it is in vain,  
Weep for your sins, and them refrain."

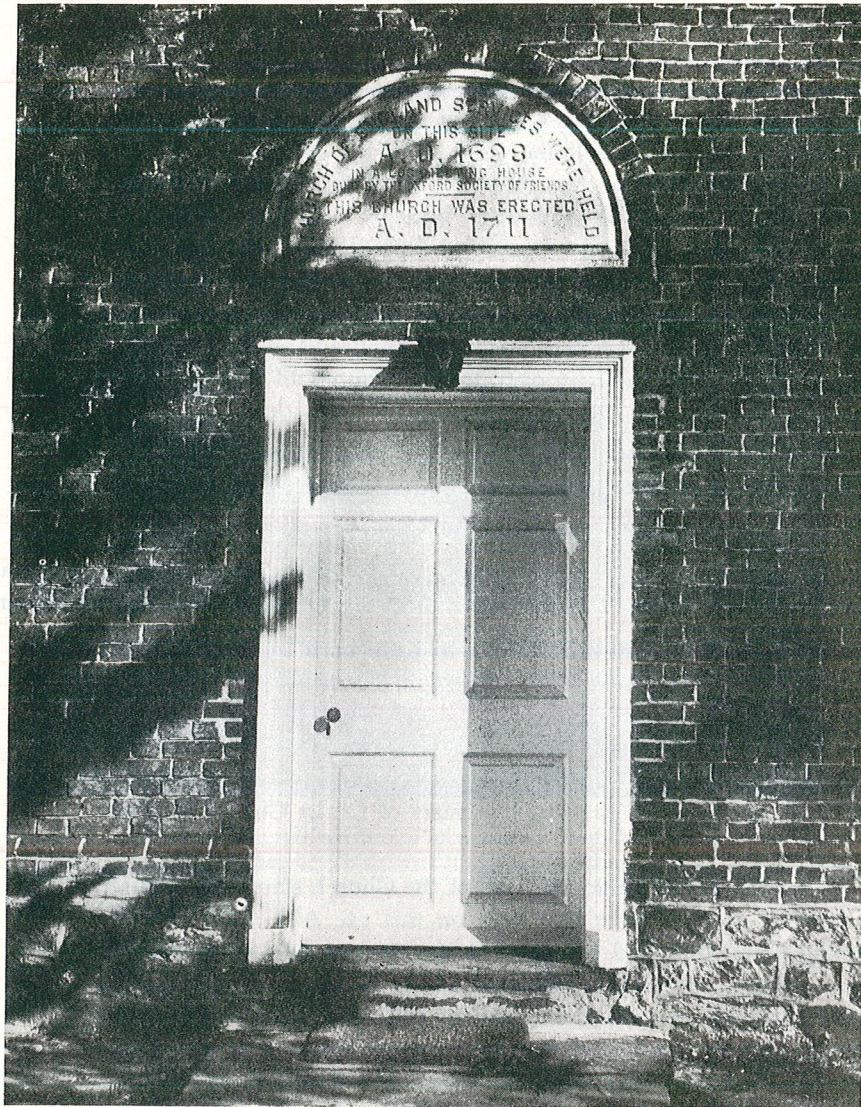
On the inside are the following:

"Here, by these lines is testify'd,  
No quaker was she when she dy'd,  
So far was she from Quakerism,  
That she desired to have baptism.  
For her, our babes and children dear,  
To this, these lines true witness bear,  
And furthermore, she did obtain,  
That faith that all shall rise again  
Out of the graves at the last day,  
And in this faith she passed away."

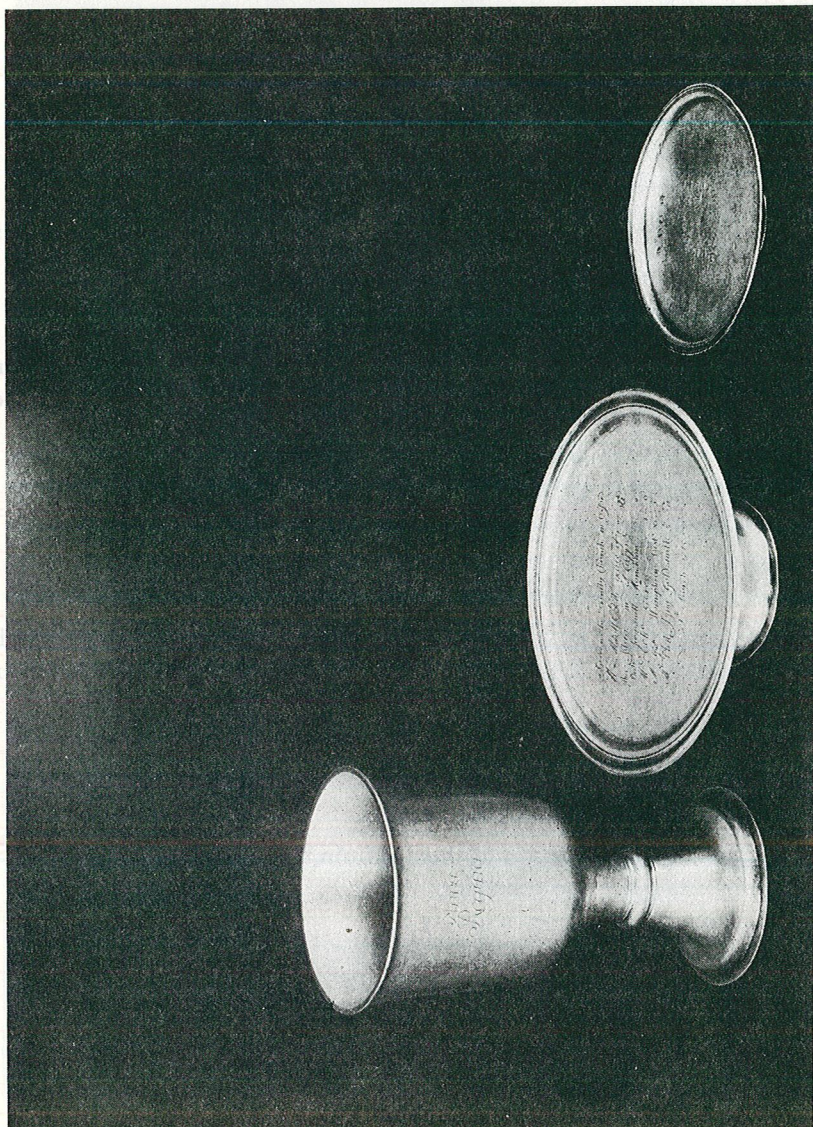
Original  
Deed

Joshua  
Carpenter

Elizabeth  
Roberts



The West Door



*The Queen Anne Chalice and Small Paten, and the Humphreys's Paten.*

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

A new church building was erected in 1711 with bricks most probably imported from England. Its dimensions were 25 feet wide by 35 feet long, being the western end of our present building. Agreeable to ecclesiastical usage, then generally followed, it was made to stand east and west, with a south door and porch; for the time and place, it was acceptable as to its size and appearance. For many years however, it was without either pews or floor, and for a still longer time without any facilities for heat.

New  
Church

A solid silver communion chalice presented by Queen Anne of England, was given to the church in 1713. It was her favorite way of showing her love for the colonial churches. As she died shortly afterward, it is probably the last one sent to America. We still use this communion cup on special occasions, though for nearly two centuries it was the only one used. Since it was beaten out by hand, slight irregularities show the process, but no dent mars its heavy plain surface. Possibly excepting the original deed, this old cup is the chief treasure of the parish. The cover is a small individual paten, and both are engraved "Annae Reginae" In order to preserve the old cup, a replica was made in recent years and presented to the church by Mr. Harry Ingersoll.

Queen  
Anne Silver

A silver paten was given to the Church March 29, 1715 by Rev. John Humphreys and some friends of Christ Church, Philadelphia. The primitive workmanship is quite evident and the engraving on it reads:

Given to Trinity Church in Oxford

	Oz.	Wt.	
M. Michael Booth gave of this			
silver in a Cupp .....	5	10	
Doctor Samuel Monckton .....	3	6	Humphreys
Mr. Tho. Cress .....	1	0	Silver
	s	d	Paten
Mr. Joh. Humphreys, Pastor .....	16	11½	
Mr. Phil Syng, Goldsmith .....	5	0	
29th March 1715			

The congregation had also received, before this, from the Society in England, a small library of valuable books, for the use of the minister in charge. Of these, only one, though that, fortunately, is the most valuable of all—Pool's Synopsis, in five volumes—yet remains. In 1746 was received from the same source the fine old copy of the

Early  
Library

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

Sacred Scriptures, with their best interpreter, the Prayer Book, bound with them, from which the lessons were still being read at all services in the year 1857, and for probably many years after.

Andrew  
Rudman

Rev. Andrew Rudman, a Swede, was minister to the church from 1705 until his death in 1708. In a letter, written in 1705 by the Rev. John Talbot, a companion of George Keith, occurs a passage which showed not merely that Mr. Rudman was at that time the minister at Oxford, but that he was not without his troubles as such. "Mr. Rudman serves in Philadelphia but chiefly at the country church in Oxford, near Frankfort, with good success; but he has met with some disturbances from Edward Eaton, who has been very peevish and scandalous in words and writings, for which he was presented to the Grand Jury, but it was hard to persuade them to find the bill". Curiously enough, the head stone at the grave of this person is one of the few that remain of that early date, and the inscription is distinctly legible. It gives a more favorable account of him.

"Here lieth the body of Edward Eaton, who departed this life December Ye 25, in the year of our Lord God 1709,  
Aged 65 years.

My dear Redeemer is above,  
Him am i gone to see,  
And all my friends in Christ below  
Shall soon come after me.

Edward  
Eaton

In Christ i lived and dy'd  
Through him I live again,  
My body here is lay'd  
My soul with Christ shall reign."

For a time, after the death of Mr. Rudman, services were held by Mr. Evans, from Christ Church, and by a few missionaries of the "Society" then in the Colony. Of these Rev. John Humphreys, of Chester, was most frequent in his visits until 1714.

John  
Humphreys

An extract from Mr. Humphreys reads: "By his occasional sermons and the visits of other clergyman, the people of Oxford were encouraged to build a neat and convenient church. The congregation consisted chiefly of the younger people, and the whole town was composed of about twenty families. They not only built a church, but subscribed £ 20 a year to their minister in money and country produce."

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

He was followed on October 6th, 1714 by Rev. John Clubb, who served the people in Radnor as well as Oxford. He was well known in both towns having previously been schoolmaster at Philadelphia. There is a record of baptism performed by him in 1709. The following entry of it gives an idea of how records were made at that time.

John  
Clubb

"May Thornhill daughter of Joseph Thornhill and Elizabeth his wife was born the forth day of August at Eight O'Clock in the morning and Baptized by Mr. Clubb, Minister. Anno Dom — 1709." Nine other children of the same family were later baptized in the church. It was said of Mr. Clubb that he was "very earnest" in all parts of his ministerial office, and very successful in his labors, and happy in engaging "the love and esteem of all his peoples". His time of service, however, was very short as he died in the course of a year, Christmas 1715. In a letter to the "Society" in England his parishioners wrote: "Mr. Clubb, our late minister was the first that undertook the cure of Oxford and Radnor (about 20 miles distant) and he paid dear for it, for the great fatigue of riding between the two churches in such dismal ways and weather as we generally have for four months in the winter, soon put a period to his life".

Early  
Baptisms

In the next year after Mr. Clubb's death in 1716, Mr. Evans again served Oxford and Radnor, retaining however, the charge of Christ Church, Philadelphia. He continued as missionary for two years, discharging his duties with great diligence "to the advantage of the people and his own credit". He died soon after this, in Maryland, where he had removed. "with this general character, that he had behaved himself as a faithful missionary, and had proved a great instrument towards settling religion and the Church of England in those wild countries".

Mr. Evans  
returns

It was in anticipation of Mr. Evans' removal that another correspondence was opened with the Society in 1717 for a minister. Of this, the substance of one of the letters, from Oxford and Radnor, is given by Mr. Humphreys, and presents an amusing contrast between this section of the country now, and then. In answer to an exhortation from the Society, to consider on some proper means among themselves, for making sufficient allowance for a minister to reside constantly among them, they say, "That they were heartily disposed to do their best, but at present their circumstances would not do great things— They were at present but poor settlers, who had newly settled lands backwards in the wilderness, and had not yet so much as their own

Poor  
Settlers

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

habitations free from debt; that indeed they had built churches in hopes of having ministers from the Society, and had thereby so much encumbered themselves, that it would be some years, in all probability, before they could clear that debt”.

Robert Weyman As a result of the previous correspondence, Rev. Robert Weyman was appointed as missionary of the Society in 1718 and arrived in Philadelphia November 19, 1719. He had charge of both Radnor and Oxford until 1732.

The first Glebe In 1724, the people at Oxford purchased a house, orchard, and 63 acres of land, for the use and habitation of the minister as a glebe of the church.

The people at Radnor obliged themselves to contribute £ 40, proclamation money of that country, yearly, toward the support of a minister, to preach to them in Welsh, their native tongue, because many of them did not understand English.

Whitemarsh Mr. Weyman extended his labors to several other places on week-days, when he could be spared from his own immediate charge. He often traveled to Conestoga about 40 miles beyond Radnor (probably the present city of Lancaster) “and baptised there and elsewhere above seventy children in one year”. Another account stated, “Mr. Weyman hath acquainted the Society, that the members of the church increase continually; that there is a congregation at Whitemarsh (later St. Thomas) about ten miles distant from Oxford, who are very desirous of a minister, and have, for decent performance of Divine Worship, erected a goodly stone building. Mr. Weyman continues in this mission with good success”. The house, orchard and 63 acres of land previously referred to, were purchased of Solomon Hall, and were situated on or near King’s Road, (now Bristol Turnpike) about midway between the towns of Holmesburg and Frankford. (Cornelius Park is part of this). They were bought for the church by Josiah Harper and Toby Leech, “yeoman”, and by them held in trust, “for the use and benefit of the minister of Trinity Church, Oxford, for the time being forever”. The price paid for them seems to have been about £ 130, of which £ 95 were contributed by one person, a Mrs., or as she is styled in the Vestry Records, “Widow Mallows”; probably the widow of Henry Mallows, the person named in Mr. Graves deed of 1700, as his attorney for the acknowledgment of the deed.

Location of Glebe

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

Mr. Weyman wrote to the Society in England in 1725 and stated that the number of inhabitants in the township of Oxon (Oxford) consisted of about sixty families and Radnor the same. Of these at Oxford we find the names of James Morgan, Peter Taylor, Charles Finney, Edward Collins, Robert Griffith, Toby Leech, Josiah Harper, Griffith Griffith, Thomas Griffith, Anthony Turner, William West, Nicholas Hickst, Roger Turner, Wm. Keith, Wm. Whartnaby, Thos. Duffield, Joseph Hawley, Richard Taylor, and Mr. Tabbett. Other names in Mr. Weyman’s list are Stroot, Mason, Sutton, Hall, Beals, Pugh, Streater, Porter, Smalwood, Harris, Swanson, Skinner, Finch, Davis, Ashburnham and Adams.

Number of Inhabitants

The whole number of communicants about that time seems to have been near fifty, though not that many on any one occasion. The congregation seems to have been united, zealous and prosperous. A number of them testified their interest in the church by benefactions to it at their death, as well as through life. Of these, Griffith Griffith deserves to be especially mentioned at having at his decease, bequeathed £300, a large sum for those times.

Number of Communicants

Toward the latter part of Mr. Weyman’s ministry, the congregation at Radnor obtained a minister better able to preach to them in Welsh, so that he confined his labors principally to Oxford and Whitemarsh. These two congregations continued to be associated under one ministry for quite a long period. Mr. Weyman left about 1732 or 1733 and was succeeded on St. John’s Day 24th of June 1733, by the Rev. Alexander Howie.

During Mr. Howie’s ministry of nine years very little is known, as there is almost an entire absence of Parochial Records. There is no record of the appointment of vestrymen, between the years 1733 and 1742. He did write “that the congregation increases so much that there is not room in the church to hold them”. In one year he baptized seventy children and seventy-six adults, and last Easter Day administered the Sacrament to forty-six communicants.

Alexander Howie

Mr. Howie in writing to the Society in England on September 29, 1741, said “My income last year from Oxford was £16,10 s., 6 d. paper money and this is paid by subscription sometimes 10, 5, 4, 3 or 2 shillings at a time so that when a sum of money is paid after this way, it is but small service to a family. The people of our province are, this and that, here and there, and of no steady principles, sometimes

Mr. Howie’s Income

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

anything or nothing, just as the humor takes them or the Spirit of Giddiness moves them". He also said there were forty-nine heads of families in Oxford.

In 1742, Mr. Howie left for the West Indies expecting to return in a few months but there is no evidence that he ever did return.

Aeneas  
Ross

In 1742, he was succeeded by Rev. Aeneas Ross who remained until 1758. He had previously officiated for about a year in Christ Church, Philadelphia, during a vacancy in the rectorship, and "with great acceptance", "commending himself to all person by the excellence of his character and deportment".

Betsy  
Ross

In 1745, Mr. Ross married Sarah, granddaughter of Toby Leech, Sr. of Cheltenham, an English gentleman who came to Philadelphia in 1682. His family was perhaps the most important family that worshipped at Trinity Church. The graves of Toby Leech, Sr. and members of his and Aeneas Ross' families are in Trinity Churchyard. One of Aeneas Ross' sons was John Ross, whose widow Betsy Ross made the first "Stars and Stripes". George, a brother of Aeneas Ross, was subsequently a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

In his ministry at Trinity Oxford and St. Thomas, Whitemarsh, he was faithful and assiduous in the performance of his duties. A large number of baptisms left recorded by him in the Vestry Book, attest his diligence in at least this particular. He also solemnized a great number of marriages; and he was the first of all the ministers here to make anything like a regular record of even these important services. He was, unfortunately, almost the last to do it, for upwards of half a century.

These interesting entries follow:

Negro  
Baptisms

Mary, a Negro Woman, wife to Solomon Radher, who is a free negro, was-baptized at Wm. G. Griffiths, 3d March 1750. Aged 60 Years.

William a Negro man belonging to Wm. G. Griffith, baptized same day, aged 20 years.

John a Negro boy belonging to Griffith baptized same day, aged 13 years.

In the Vestry Minutes of Mr. Ross' time, there are very few entries of any importance beyond the mere appointments of wardens and vestrymen. One of the few, is an order in vestry, on March 25,

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

1744, that "Mr. Swift alter the Reading Desk and Clerk's Pew, at his own expense, for the benefit of his family, sitting in a pew below the Reading Desk". This pew was, most probably, the only one in the church. First  
Pew

In 1746, there is an entry which indicates a good state of both moral and church feeling in the congregation. It is as follows: "The vestry and wardens having taken into consideration the ill-behavior of George Forster, schoolmaster, ordered that he should be immediately dismissed from teaching school, and that no other person should be admitted to teach school in the house belonging to Oxford Church, unless he bring with him ample testimonials of his good behavior from the people where he last taught school, and also of his being well qualified for the same. And likewise that he be a regular member of the Church of England."

On Easter Monday 1751, it was "Ordered, that a new back door be made for the church, with convenient speed"; the place for it, no doubt, being the middle of the north wall, and opposite to the south door and porch. North  
Door

Among the officers of the Parish in Mr. Ross' time, are John Rush, John Taylor, Joseph Ashton, Jr., Edward Tillyer, Joseph Walton, Issac Ashton, Jacob Duffield, John Boutcher and Jonathan Bavington.

In 1758, Mr. Ross was transferred to the Mission in Newcastle, Delaware, and the care of the church was assigned to Rev. Hugh Neill, of the Missions in Kent County, Delaware. He was not perhaps so refined or so well educated as Mr. Ross but more active and busy in the temporal affairs of the church. At the first meeting of the congregation after his arrival, on Easter Monday 1759, a "subscription was opened for repairing the glebe, and a handsome sum was obtained from those present". It was also ordered, that "Mr. Collins' legacy", which was £2—14s., "in the hands of Mr. Carvell, and Mrs. Leech's legacy, in her son's hands, be immediately appropriated to floor the church". Mr. Carvell seems to have been, at this time, the only surviving member of the congregation of 1718. He had been until now, for many years, a church warden. Hugh  
Neill  
  
Church  
Floored

At a meeting in August of the same year, a committee consisting of Jacob and John Hall and Samuel Swift was appointed to receive their legacies, and out of them not only to floor, but "pew with

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

double pews" the church; "both to be completed before the fall fair, and the committee to have first choice of pews, they charging nothing for their trouble".

Glebe House  
Burned

On Sunday, October 28th, 1759, Mr. Neill wrote that while officiating at the Church, his house and most valuable effects were burned and two of his children narrowly escaped the flames.

At a meeting of the congregation on March 6, 1760, it was decided to sell the present glebe and buy another and appointed a committee to obtain authority from the House of Assembly to do so.

First  
Pulpit

On October 13th another important resolution was adopted, "That the church of Oxford be enlarged, and that a subscription be opened for the purpose". There is no record that this resolution was put into effect. Apparently, all that was done at that time to the church, was to floor and pew it, and to furnish it with a "Pulpit and Morning Cloath"; the cost of these last being £5-10s. It was, moreover, only a part of the church—most probably the pews—that were floored at that time. It was not until 1807 that the floor was extended over the whole church, aisles as well as pews. Of the church as newly pewed and furnished, a draught is on record in the Vestry Book, with the names of the persons who first occupied the pews. There were three aisles, one broad one, from north to south, and two narrower ones, from east to west. The communion table was in the middle of the east end. The pulpit was in the northeast corner. Immediately before it was the clerk's pew, and before it the minister's. Besides these there were twenty other pews, and they were occupied by persons or families bearing the names of Northop, Rambo, Finney, Todd, Ingram, Leech, Jackson, McRay, Taggert, Ashton, Carvel, Duffield, Clift, Hall, Boutcher, Huston, McGargee, McVagh, Swift, Bavington, Bishop, Dilworth, Keen, Martin, Smith, Cotman, Whitman, Taylor, Harper and Grandine. The additional names of Fairbottle, Pegg, Lydert, Finch, Roos and Neal, are to be found in a list of twenty-three persons who received the Communion on Whit-Sunday, May 25, 1760—the first occasion, probably, on which it was administered after the improvements made in the church. Besides these, and that of Timmons, there were, it is thought, few or no other names in the congregation at that time.

Families  
in Church

Mr. Neill, writing to the Society June 5, 1762, said "The congregation was as decent and orderly as any in this province. However,

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

one inveterate prejudice reigns among them, this is their antipathy to Infant Baptism. I have only christened above five children since my last letter (January 10, 1762) two white adults and four adult Negroes. The professed members of the Church at Oxford number about 150. There are nearly the same number attending Whitemarsh but not above twenty or thirty are professed members of the Church, the rest being Dissenters. As to the number of Dissenters, they are almost innumerable: Quakers, Presbyterians, old and new, i.e. New Lights, Baptists, both Seventh Day and First Day, Moravians, Dump-lers and Pretests, with many other sorts, besides Dutch Calvinists and Lutherans."

Size of  
Congregation

The resolution in reference to the purchase of a new glebe was carried into effect soon after its adoption; sixty-five acres and sixty perches on Tacony Creek, beginning at the village of Cedar Grove, were purchased, in 1761 for £540. The old glebe was sold for £4 an acre, or in all £252.

New Glebe  
purchased

It was, no doubt, to obtain funds to meet the excess of this outlay over what was realized from the sale of the old glebe, and from subscriptions, and to defray the expense of putting the new parsonage and glebe in order, that a lottery was soon after resorted to. This expedient however, proved to be an unfortunate one; whilst it does not seem to have been very profitable, it occasioned much trouble, and gave rise to not a little ill-feeling in the congregation.

Lottery for  
New Glebe

The new names that appear among the officers of the Parish in Mr. Neill's time are, John Hall, James Dilworth, Richard Finney, Amos Grandine, Thomas Leech, Richard Timmons, Nathan Whitman, Matthew Ingram, Jacob Laughlin, Benj. Cotman, Jr., John Nice and John Keene.

Mr. Neill removed to Maryland in 1766 and a few months later the Vestry invited Rev. William Smith, D.D., of the College of Philadelphia and a gentleman eminent for his learning and abilities, to accept the charge of the congregation; and he "in consideration of the difficulties they were laboring under" consented to do so for a time, or until they could obtain another minister. He continued to officiate here, certainly until 1770, and most probably, for several years longer.

Dr. William  
Smith

In 1770, the church wardens and vestrymen, in a communication addressed to the Society in England, thus write concerning him: "that since Mr. Neill's removal, the Mission hath been supplied by the Rev.

## THE COLONIAL DAYS

Dr. William Smith, who notwithstanding his many other engagements, hath been constant in his attendance upon us, and zealous for the good of the congregation". In the remainder of the letter, as they speak of a fact much to his credit, and of a change and improvement in the church building, which was probably made soon after, we make a further quotation from it: "We are now about putting a new roof on the church, and propose erecting a gallery; for defraying expenses of which, as it would be too great for us at present, Dr. Smith hath generously agreed to appropriate (with the Society's leave) one-half of the two years' rent of the Glebe due to him, and also one-half of the present year's rent."

## REVOLUTIONARY DAYS

Records  
lost during  
Revolution

Dr. Smith probably continued to officiate for them, at least occasionally, until his removal from Philadelphia to Maryland, about the year 1779. Nothing, however is *known* in reference to this point; for the book containing the Parochial Records for several years from 1770, was lost about the year 1782.

Preface to  
Prayer  
Book

We are left, therefore, in entire ignorance as to the affairs of the Parish during the whole of the eventful period of the Revolution. Dr. Smith was the most distinguished Episcopal clergyman who officiated here and considered one of the most sagacious men of his age. He performed some very valuable and constructive service in the formation of the American Episcopal Church. The admirable preface to the Prayer Book was composed by him at the first General Convention of the American Church, and it was he who gave the name of the "Protestant Episcopal Church" at the convention of clergy and laymen held in 1780. At this time he was President of Washington College and lived in Maryland.

At the date of the last entry in our church records of 1770, the church wardens were Joseph Thornhill and Nathan Whitman. The Vestrymen were Jacob Hall, Esq., Benjamin Cotman, John Boutcher, Joseph Jackson, John Chappel, Matthew Ingram. Mr. Hall had now been in the Vestry nearly thirty years, as had also Dr. Samuel Swift, whose name disappears with the minutes of 1769. These two gentlemen, with John Hall and Issac Ashton, Esq., appear to have been the principal persons in the congregation for most of this long period. Other persons who had been vestrymen for the first time between 1766

## REVOLUTIONARY DAYS

and 1770, were John Swift, John Cotman and John Hafty. But few of these, or of any of all the names mentioned, occur again in the Parish Records. That of Benj. Cotman is a striking exception. Not only does his name appear again after the Revolution, but he continued to be either warden or vestryman, and a leading one, too, until his death in 1812.

## AMERICAN CHURCH PERIOD

By a strange coincidence, the first minister of the Parish after the Revolution was the Rev. William Smith, from the Episcopal Church of Scotland. He was no relation to Dr. Wm. Smith, the previous rector. He took charge of this church and All Saints', Lower Dublin (Torresdale) which was built in 1772 to accommodate members of Trinity Oxford living in Torresdale, and most probably of St. Thomas's Whitemarsh, on the first day of January, 1785. He only stayed a short time; for in the next year, he was succeeded by Rev. Joseph Pilmore. He had previously been a Methodist and the second pastor of Old St. George's Methodist Church. He was ordained in the Episcopal Church November 29, 1785 and called to Trinity Oxford early in 1786 which was his first charge. He was a remarkable man with noble, dignified bearing and a fervent preacher. He later became rector of St. Paul's Church, Philadelphia where he continued until 1821. He died in 1825 at the age of 85 and is buried under the chancel in St. Paul's Church.

William  
Smith

Joseph  
Pilmore

In February 1786, measures were taken to have the two churches of Trinity Oxford, and All Saints Lower Dublin, incorporated. In the charter obtained, St. Thomas Church, Whitemarsh was included.

Churches  
Incorpor-  
ated

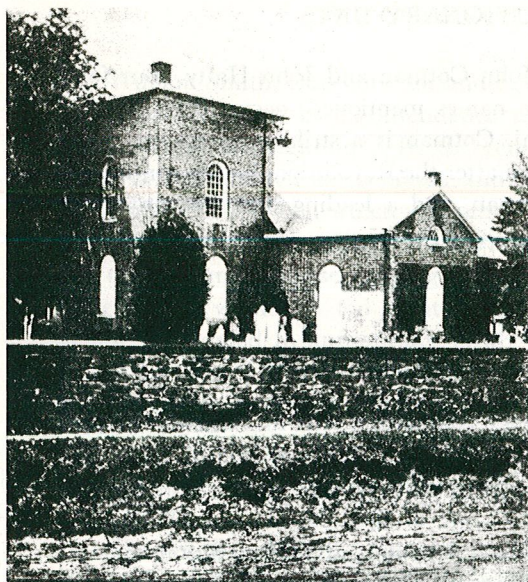
In May 1786, these churches were all brought into union with the Convention by agreeing to the "Act of Association of the Clergy and Congregations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Pennsylvania, adopted in the Convention of 1785.

Join Con-  
vention

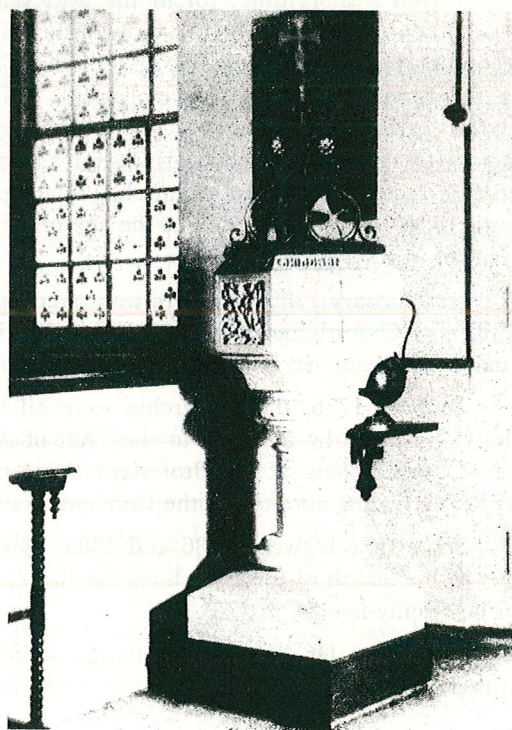
Some time between 1786 and 1789, there was added twenty-one feet to the length of the church on the east end, making its dimensions to be twenty-five by fifty-six feet.

Church  
Enlarged

How long Dr. Pilmore continued to officiate in the associated churches does not appear. It most probably was until 1791, when



*Wings and Tower  
of 1833 and 1839*



*The Nimlet  
Memorial Font*

## AMERICAN CHURCH PERIOD

there seems to have been a long vacancy, during part of which, the two churches of Trinity Oxford and All Saints, had occasional services from Dr. Wm. Smith, who had returned to Philadelphia. He does not seem to have officiated at Whitmarsh, as did none of the subsequent ministers of Trinity Oxford and All Saints; though the three churches continued to be associated in the same charter of incorporation.

In 1798, the Rev. John H. Hobart (afterwards Bishop of New York) became minister of Trinity Oxford and All Saints, and continued for one year. These were his first parishes, and he here commenced that career of zeal and usefulness for which his after life was so distinguished.

John H.  
Hobart

Three years later, Rev. Charles Cotton was chosen to succeed him, at a salary of \$550 annually divided between Oxford and All Saints, and remained here between one and two years. After his withdrawal in 1804, another vacancy of five years occurred, during a part of which the Rev. Dr. James Abercrombie, assistant at St. Peter's of Philadelphia, officiated.

Charles  
Cotton

James  
Abercrombie

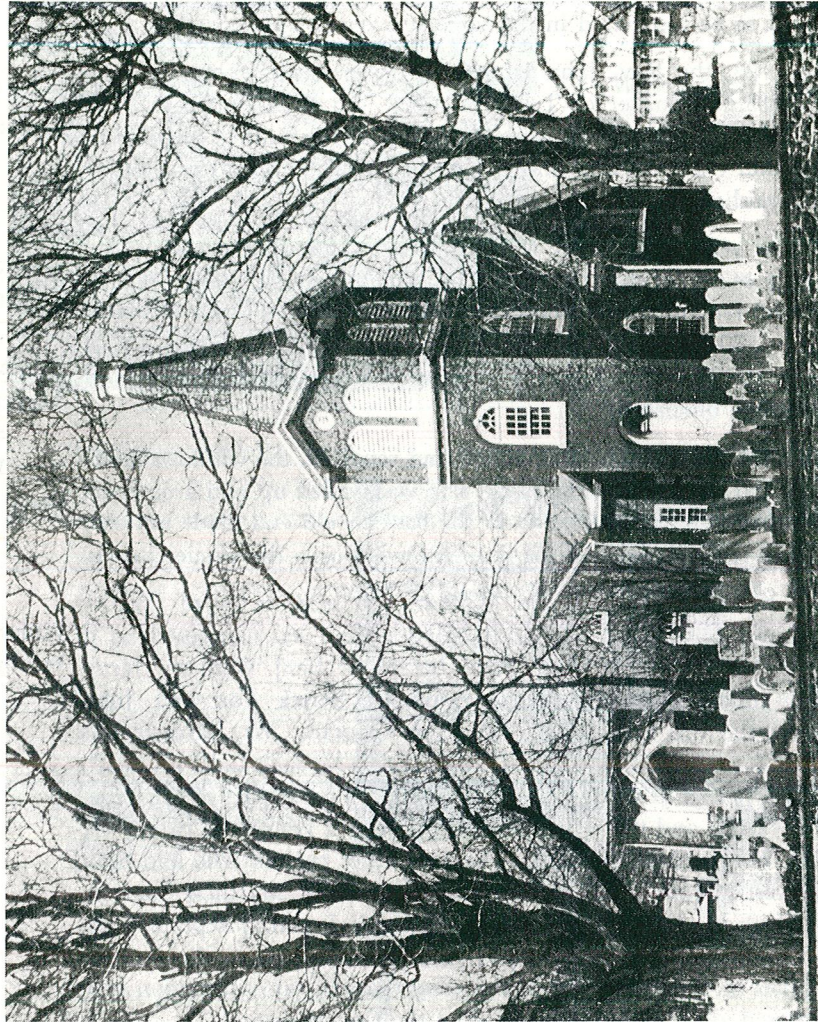
In 1807, the church was painted and repaired, the windows made uniform and the door on the north side was walled up and a new one made in the west end, the pews in the back or old end made uniform with those in the front and the floor extended over the whole church.

New West  
Door

In 1809, the Rev. James Wiltbank became rector of Trinity Oxford and All Saints. The vestry at this time was composed, as it had been principally for some years before, of Benj. Cotman, Jacob Ashton, John Lardner, Abraham Duffield, Serick Fox and John Knowles; the two first-named being the wardens. Mr. Lardner was chosen a vestryman in 1793, and continued to be such until his death in 1825, a period of thirty-two years. During a great part of this time, he was warden and treasurer. Mr. Ashton was a vestryman twenty-six and Mr. Fox twenty-one years. The only other persons who had been in the vestry from 1785, were Joseph Thornhill, Matthew Ingram, Jacob Duffield, Nathan Whitman, Jr., Jacob Leech, Joseph Ashton, John Cotman, Demas Worrel and Wm. Johnson. As to the number of families or communicants in the congregation, no information is to be gathered, even from the Journals of the Convention.

James  
Wiltbank

In 1811, the two vestries very properly erected a neat mural tablet in All Saints Church, in memory of Patrick Neal, who, though a member of Trinity Oxford, and interred here, had left a handsome



*The Tower built in 1875. South and East side of Church*

## AMERICAN CHURCH PERIOD

legacy to All Saints Church. They also had a "head and foot stone" placed at his grave. Also in 1811, St. Luke's Church, Germantown was built to accommodate members of Trinity Church Oxford living in Germantown.

In 1813, the vestry judged it best to sell about thirty-eight and a half acres of the glebe land, and invest the proceeds in something more profitable. They obtained \$4,000 for this land. The remainder of the glebe was sold in 1838 for \$3,000. In 1816, Mr. Wiltbank resigned as rector.

Glebe  
Sold

At this time there were fifty-five communicants in the two congregations. The new vestrymen in Trinity Oxford, from 1809, had been Samuel Swift, John Wilkinson, John Trump, Jesse Waterman, Charles H. Israel and John Salter.

A short time after the resignation of Mr. Wiltbank, he was succeeded in the latter part of 1816 by Rev. George Sheets. He continued to be the esteemed pastor of the two churches until their separation into distinct corporations in 1835. He continued as rector of Trinity Oxford until the spring of 1854, a period of nearly thirty-eight years. A marble memorial tablet was placed in the north wall of the church, attesting to this fact. His rectorship had been the longest in our history. Both in 1835 and 1854, resolutions were passed by the Vestry, expressive of high regard for Mr. Sheets, and of a grateful appreciation of his long and valuable services.

George  
Sheets  
Trinity and  
All Saints  
separate

During this time, the two churches, Emanuel, Holmesburg and St. Mark's, Frankford, were built, in good part through the efforts of Mr. Sheets.

In 1833, two wings were added to the Church, each of which were about seventeen by twenty-one feet. In 1839, a tower was built for a vestry and Sunday School room. The expense of this improvement was born by Joseph Swift, and the Misses Mary and Elizabeth Swift, sister and son of Samuel Swift a former vestryman.

Wings and  
Tower  
Added

The number of families in the congregation at the time of the separation from All Saints in 1835, was upwards of thirty. The number of communicants was also about thirty. The number of communicants had increased in 1846 to sixty-two. This was just before the organization of St. Mark's church in Frankford, and this event reduced the communicants to twenty-eight.

## AMERICAN CHURCH PERIOD

Between the years, 1816 and 1854, the following persons, not already named had been added to the vestry; John Green, James Butland, Jonathan Bavington, Jonathan Clift, William Overington, Daniel Yonker, Lynford, Richard P. and John Lardner, Edmund Green, Thomas Duffield, John and George Fox, Samuel S. Leech, Michael Hartley, Jacob Snyder, Robert Whitaker, Benjamin and Harvey Rowland, John Cuckle and James McMurtie.

Mr. Sheets was succeeded in 1854 by Rev. Edward Y. Buchanan, a brother of James Buchanan, President of the United States. Our church owes a great deal to him. He served as rector for twenty-eight years until 1882.

Edward Y.  
Buchanan

In 1857, there were about fifty families in the parish with fifty-four communicants. In addition to the three acres of land originally given to it by Thomas Graves, the church also owned about two and a half acres adjoining it, extending to Second Street (now Rising Sun Avenue) and a lot of one acre on the opposite side of Second Street, on which was erected a handsome parsonage in 1856. The churchyard was enclosed with a stone wall which is still in a good state of preservation.

New  
Parsonage

The mounting-steps, an important feature for the ladies, were used for mounting their riding horses. The wooden shed, for tying up the horses, remained standing until about two years ago. The church was in a very healthy financial condition at this time with funds in the amount of \$7,000 to \$8,000. There was a remarkable increase in charitable offerings and the offerings for some missionary and benevolent purposes were the largest made by any church in the diocese. For some years up to 1874 large contributions had been made to a fund amounting to about \$52,000 for the erection of an additional wing to the Episcopal Hospital.

Mounting  
Steps

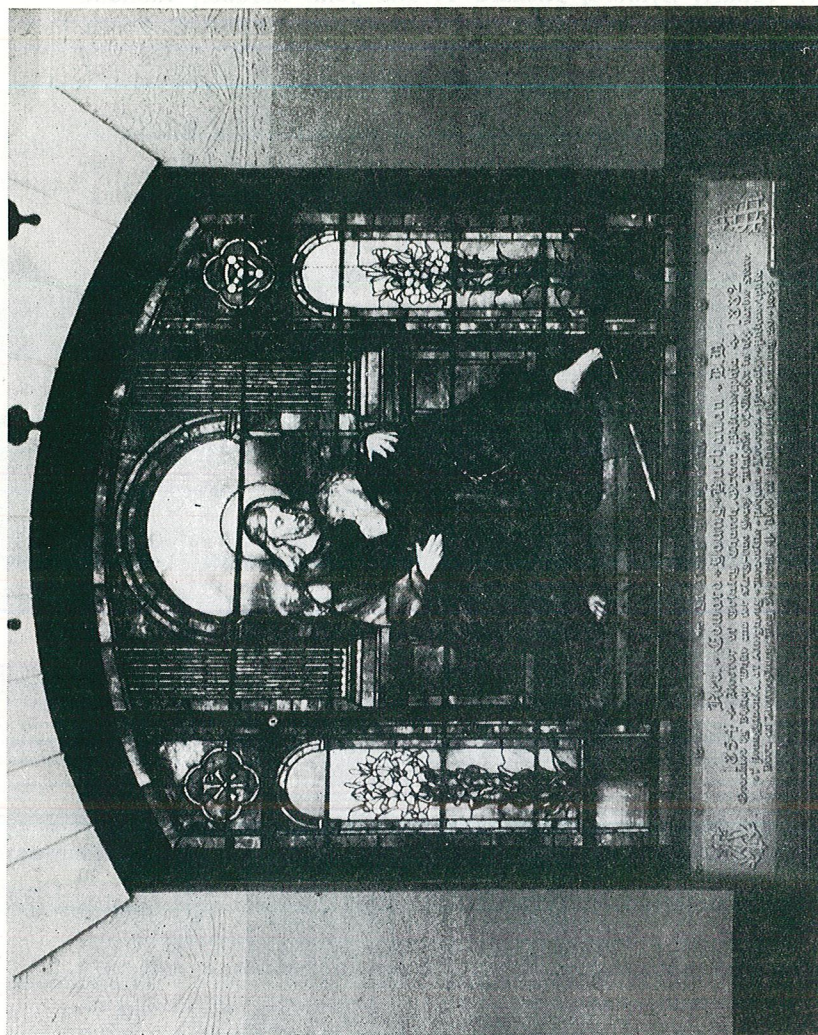
The Chapel in Crescentville was built in 1870 and enlarged in 1878. It was unfortunately destroyed by fire on the night of November 29, 1925, but was rebuilt through the generosity of Miss Maud Fisher as a memorial to some of her family. Upon her death, January 5, 1932 she left a substantial endowment fund for the chapel. Not long after, the Chapel became a separate parish under the name of All Saints Church—Crescentville.

Crescent-  
ville  
Chapel

In 1875, the old square tower, (erected in 1839), where Dr. Buchanan held his first Sunday School and also used as a vestry room, was cut down and made uniform with the rest of the church and made



*Interior of Church*



*The Buchanan Memorial Window*

## AMERICAN CHURCH PERIOD

into a recessed chancel. A new tower was built through the kindness of Mrs. Mary P. Lardner who also had a bell weighing 1500 lbs. installed in it.

The New Tower

Ill health and failing eyesight made it necessary for Dr. Buchanan to resign October 1, 1882 but he lived to January 20, 1895 in his 84th year. He was succeeded by Rev. R. Bowden Shepherd, who had been assistant to Dr. Buchanan for about eighteen months. The one thing of importance during Mr. Shepherd's rectorship was the erection of a parish building, adjacent to the church, dedicated April 23, 1883 by Bishop Stevens as a memorial to Dr. Buchanan. It was regularly used for parish work and for the Sunday School until the erection of the New Parish House in 1928, on the Rising Sun Avenue end of the church property.

R. Bowden Shepherd

Buchanan Memorial Building

An organ, built by the Roosevelt Company (of the family of the former President) was installed in the west end of the church in 1884. The whole amount needed for it was placed on the offertory plate at one time. The organ consisted of seven speaking stops and three hundred and five pipes with a single manuel attached console. It was well built and a very good instrument.

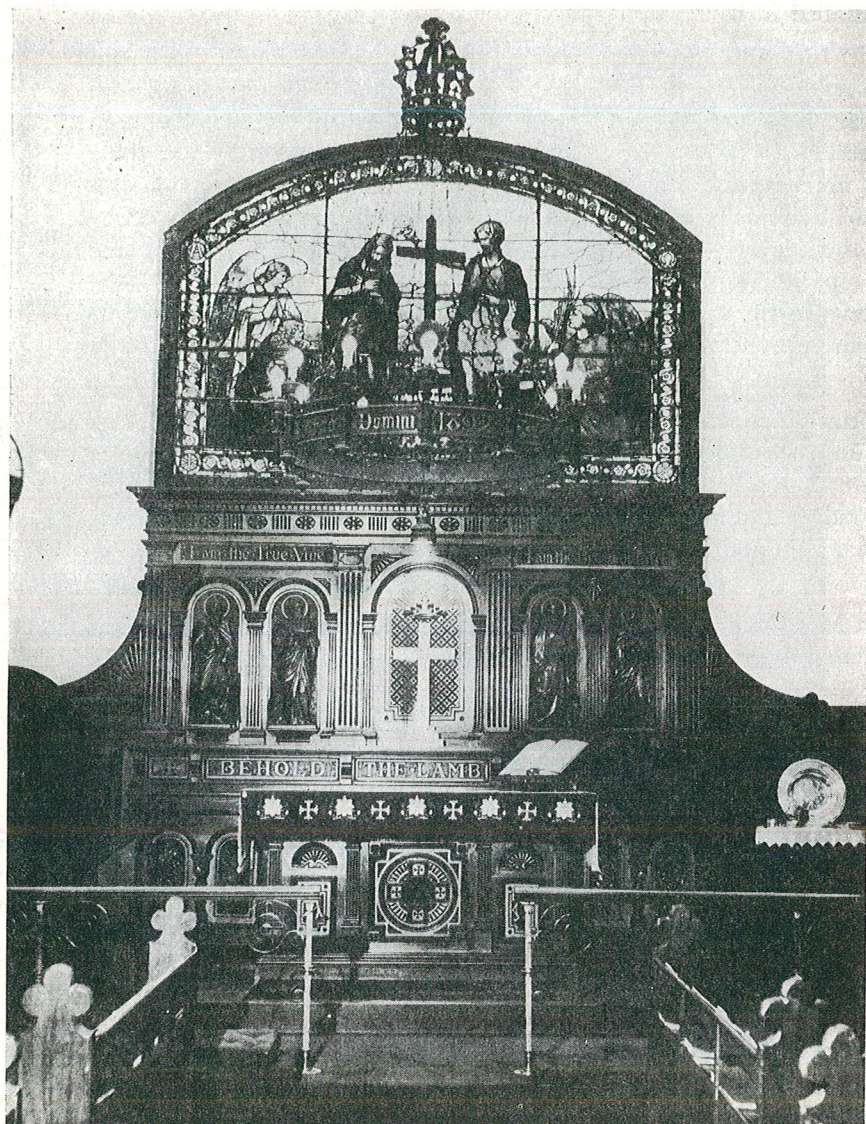
New Organ

Also at this time a brass altar cross was presented as a memorial to Mr. John Cooke, a vestryman for thirty years. Brass altar vases were also presented as another memorial.

Mr. Shepherd was succeeded by Rev. Henry C. Macbeth, who took charge November 1, 1885, and was with us until February 14, 1891. During his rectorship the church enjoyed its greatest prosperity. He had not been with us long when all the pews that were for rent were taken, even those in the wings. As all the pews, including the free ones, were regularly filled, it was deemed necessary to close the south door and put two pews there. It was during his rectorship that the endowment fund was started. The wall between the church proper and the old tower was taken away to make the recessed chancel; an altar, credence table, choir stalls and reredos with full length figures of the Apostles, of richly carved walnut, were given as a memorial by Robert A. Ryerss, a vestryman. Also Mrs. Ryerss gave a beautiful festival cloth of heavy ivory white brocade, heavily embroidered and jeweled. It was the work of the Philadelphia School of Art Needlework. The bronze corona, suspended in the chancel, was presented by Miss Sally Waln as a memorial to Mrs. Ingersoll. She also presented the silver flagon and the alms basin.

Henry C. Macbeth

Great changes and improvements



*The Ryerss Altar with Reredos and Whitaker Memorial Window*

## AMERICAN CHURCH PERIOD

The large beautiful stained glass window over the altar representing the baptism of Christ was the gift of Mrs. Ann Whitaker, as a memorial to her husband and children who lie in the churchyard and the beautiful stained glass window on the north wall, with a large silver bronze plate under it, was the gift of the parishioners in memory of Dr. Buchanan. The carved walnut and brass pulpit was given in memory of Harvey Rowland, a vestryman for thirty-four years, twenty-five of which were as rector's warden, and the lectern of polished brass was donated as a memorial to Rush Rowland, rector's warden. The font, of carved Caen stone, was donated as a memorial by the Nimlet family. Of the several memorial tablets placed along the walls of the church, one most remarkable is that to William Overington, a vestryman for seventy years, sixty-three years of which he was treasurer. He died November 1892 within one month of being 100 years of age. He was later succeeded by his grandson William Overington, Jr. who was elected to the Vestry in 1903 and treasurer for many years until ill health caused his retirement, April 2, 1945.

Memorial  
Windows  
Other  
Memorials

The organ was moved from the west end of the nave to a recess constructed for it in the south transept. The unsightly stoves, with their long lines of whitewashed pipes, were removed and replaced by a modern heater in the basement with ventilating appliances. The spaces formerly occupied by the organ and stoves were filled in with pews similar to the old fashioned, high backed ones, with doors still retained. The blinds were removed from the windows and the sashes reglazed with cathedral glass of soft warm tints. The nave and transept walls, were painted a delicate yellow shade, and the chancel a deep rich red, with frieze in bas-relief in leather or fawn color. The arched ceilings were of blue and gold, that of the chancel being interspersed with silver stars. The pews were leather color, harmonizing with the walls and the crimson pew cushions and carpet. The scriptural text, so appropriate to this church of many generations, (taken from the Prayer Book version of Psalms) "Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another", which was removed with the wall in enlarging the chancel, was restored in letters of bronze over the arched opening of the new chancel. Furniture of uniform and appropriate design was placed in the chancel as thank offerings and memorials by members of the congregation. An Episcopal chair had been placed previously in the church in 1855 by Lloyd W. Beckley. The alterations and improvements were made from designs and under the supervision of Furness, Evans and Company, architects.

Renovations



*The Buchanan Memorial Building*

## AMERICAN CHURCH PERIOD

Mr. Macbeth was succeeded by Rev. H. A. F. Hoyt in September 1891 and remained until December 1893. He was well liked and visited much among the people but could not hold the congregation Mr. Macbeth had brought to the church. There were no further improvements to the church during his rectorship.

H. A. F. Hoyt

Rev. L. Parsons Bissell came to us November 1894 and stayed until 1902. He was a kindly man and much liked. He was particularly active in Sunday School work. He had a wide experience and was an effective preacher.

L. Parsons  
Bissell

Mr. Bissell was succeeded in 1902 by Rev. Horace F. Fuller. He was a very active man and was particularly good in visiting the sick and those in trouble. During his time the two pews which had been put in closing the south door, during Mr. Macbeth's time, were taken out and the door opened again; the choir stalls were put in through donations by the Hutchinson family, and the vested choir started; two beautiful silk flags, placed in the chancel, were presented by Mr. E. T. Stotesbury personally at a church service, through the efforts of Horace W. Castor and Mr. Woodall; the baptismal font, donated by the Nimlet family, was placed at the south door. The old sexton's house was torn down and a new one built; the burial ground was enlarged; the rectory was sold, and the \$4,500 it brought, was put in the endowment fund; the envelope system was started; the chapel in Cheltenham started by Dr. Fuller, was later transferred to Holy Nativity, Rockledge and named St. Aidan's Church.

Horace F.  
Fuller

New  
Sexton's  
House

Rectory  
sold  
St. Aidan's

At the death of Dr. Fuller in September 1915, he was succeeded by Rev. Waldemar Jansen, on December 6, 1915. During his rectorship the growth of the church was steady and sound, notwithstanding a long and world wide depression. Some important changes and improvements were made that greatly affected the vitality and growth of the church for years to come. As the rectory built in 1856 had been sold, the church purchased the property at 411 Gilham Street as a new rectory in the year 1923, after having leased it for several years. Mr. and Mrs. Jansen occupied this home until the latter part of 1946.

Waldemar  
Jansen

New  
Rectory

Probably the most important event in Mr. Jansen's rectorship was the construction of our large modern Parish House, officially opened October 21, 1928. It consists of an auditorium and balcony seating about four hundred and fifty people. It has an excellent stage with side room entrances and a back aisle. The auditorium is not only used for church gatherings and entertainments but also as the main

New Parish  
House



*The Parish House, Built 1928.*

## AMERICAN CHURCH PERIOD

room for our Church School. Directly behind the auditorium is a good sized meeting room for church organizations. This is also used by the Primary Department of our Church School. An adjoining room is the Rector's office. At a lower level is a large gymnasium of sufficient size for a regulation basket ball floor, with ample head room. This is one of the finest and largest rooms of its kind in this section. There are two other large recreation rooms, on this floor with shower and locker room, a kitchen and service room.

The gymnasium is also used for church suppers and other church affairs. Many organizations, outside the church, such as the Burholme Horticultural Society frequently make use of the building.

The building was designed by Arnold Moses, a well known architect of church buildings, and erected at a cost of about \$80,000 though it is currently appraised at \$124,000. The cost was partly defrayed by a legacy left us by Louis E. Hellerman and a fund which had been accumulating for this purpose. It has been a heavy burden to carry but has been a source of great pleasure and satisfaction to our people, particularly for the young folks by whom it is most used.

On October 19, 1936 our people were greatly shocked when certain old gravestones, in our churchyard were destroyed by vandals. The identity of the perpetrators of this outrage was never established.

Vandals

During the year 1946, the city of Philadelphia caused us considerable expense by the laying of sewer and water pipes in Disston Street along our property. In July, of this year, the rectory was renovated.

During the same year another important improvement to our church was the rebuilding of the old Roosevelt organ. This was made possible by the partial use of a generous gift to the church by Miss Bertha Dadeker, a faithful lifelong member of Trinity Church, Oxford. The work, done by the Mudler-Hunter Company, of Philadelphia, consisted of the addition of five new stops, making twelve in all, and three hundred and twenty-seven new pipes, making a total of six hundred and thirty-two pipes. It has electrical action throughout and a detached two manual console. Unquestionably this has enhanced very much the work of our fine volunteer choir and also the congregational singing. We were happy to have this work done during Mr. Jansen's rectorship as he was deeply interested in the music of the church.

Rebuilding  
of  
Organ

## AMERICAN CHURCH PERIOD

Mr. Jansen was greatly beloved by our people and his resignation in July 1946 was received with deep regret. He stayed with us however until Easter 1947, marking the second longest rectorship in our history.

Albert M. Holloway The first Sunday after Easter 1947, Rev. Albert M. Holloway became our rector. He had for some years previous been assistant at St. Mark's, Frankford but came to us from St. Paul's, Montrose, Pennsylvania. He served as a chaplain in the United States Army during World War II. During the first year of his ministry, the church was renovated, including an improvement in the lighting by the installation of indirect fluorescent lights.

At the time the church building was renovated it had been found a new roof was necessary due to dry rot in the aged beams erected in 1711. At this time it was first thought that some walls might need to be rebuilt due to bowing of the brick wall. The walls were found to be sound and solid and the bowing was due to the fact that the early brick layers evidently did not use a level.

In 1956 Mr. Holloway and several laymen established a mission in Southampton, Pa., now the Church of the Redemption. (So we see Trinity Oxford, since its early beginnings, has the proud record of having been instrumental in the founding of ten churches.)

In 1959 the Edward Young Buchanan Memorial Building was completely renovated. This fine old building is still a favorite meeting place of many organizations of the parish.

Noble M. Smith After serving Trinity Oxford as Rector from 1947, Rev. Albert Holloway tendered his resignation to accept a call to St. Luke's, Darien, Connecticut, to be effective August 21, 1961. Rev. Noble M. Smith, serving as Curate, was offered and accepted full rectorship.

In recent years, under Mr. Smith's leadership, the following has been accomplished:

Dedication of a new addition to the Parish House in the spring of 1964. This addition provided more adequate Sunday School facilities. Expansion of missionary work, specifically, a Vacation Bible School for the Onondaga Indians.

Financial assistance to Seminario Episcopal del Caribe in Puerto Rico, Church Farm School, Mission in So. Africa, also financial help to urban churches.

## AMERICAN CHURCH PERIOD

On Palm Sunday, 1970, a service of dedication for the new pipe organ was held. We were fortunate at this time to have Virgil Fox, noted organist, give a recital to a capacity attendance.

As a service to the community, permission was granted to the Police Athletic League for the use of the Parish House Gymnasium so that young people may participate in sports activities under supervision.

The congregation was saddened to hear of the death of The Rev. Waldemar Jansen, Rector Emeritus, on July 24, 1966 at age 89. Funeral services were held at All Saints Church, Norristown, Pa. July 27, 1966.

In February 1972 the vestry voted as a suitable memorial to Mr. Jansen, who served Trinity Church, Oxford so faithfully for so long, the new section of the Parish House to be identified as The Waldemar Jansen Educational Building. An appropriate plaque to be affixed and dedication of same to take place Easter Monday, April 23, 1973.

The following poem written by Mrs. May MacDowell, a faithful parishoner, best expresses the feeling of many regarding the treasures found in this sacred and hallowed church.

"Our church is old, and rather small  
Encircled by a graveyard wall  
Yet, in this quiet resting place  
The pattern of the human race is sure and clear.

"The tower spire with cross atop  
Points heavenward, and we who stop  
To lift our eyes, must surely know  
The way our Lord would have us go.

"Inside its doors the quiet calm  
Of generations long since gone  
Lives on, to breathe a gentle peace  
To cause our weariness to cease and bring us close to God.

"We kneel in prayer, and love descends  
To bless us, while it softly tends our waywardness to show  
Dear God, this hallowed spot is Thine  
The Guardian of our souls."

# MINISTERS OF TRINITY CHURCH, OXFORD

1—1698	Rev. Thomas Clayton (Missionary)
2—1700	Rev. Evan Evans (Missionary)
3—1705-1708	Rev. Andrew Rudman—Minister
4—1708-1714	Rev. John Humphreys, Evan Evans and other Missionaries
5—1714-1715	Rev. John Clubb—Minister
6—1716-1718	Rev. Evan Evans—Missionary
7—1719-1732	Rev. Robert Weyman—Minister
8—1733-1742	Rev. Alexander Howie
9—1742-1758	Rev. Aeneas Ross
10—1759-1766	Rev. Hugh Neill
11—1766-1779	Rev. William Smith, D.D.
12—1785-1786	Rev. William Smith
13—1786-1791	Rev. Joseph Pilmore
14—1791-1798	Rev. Dr. Wm. Smith (occasionally)
15—1798-1801	Rev. John H. Hobart
16—1801-1804	Rev. Charles Cotton
17—1804-1809	Rev. Dr. James Abercrombie (occasionally)
18—1809-1816	Rev. James Wiltbank
19—1816-1854	Rev. George Sheets
20—1854-1882	Rev. Dr. Edward Y. Buchanan
21—1882-1885	Rev. R. Bowden Shepherd
22—1885-1891	Rev. Henry G. Macbeth
23—1891-1893	Rev. Henry A. F. Hoyt
24—1894-1902	Rev. L. Parsons Bissell
25—1902-1915	Rev. Horace F. Fuller
26—1915-1947	Rev. Waldemar Jansen
27—1947-1961	Rev. Albert M. Holloway, D.D.
28—1961-	Rev. Noble M. Smith



*The Church Building, North and West Sides.*